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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/511,426	10/14/2004	Tatsuo Hoshino	21246 US (CO38435/0181394)	2404
7590 Stephen M Haracz Bryan Cave 1290 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10104			EXAMINER MARX, IRENE	
			ART UNIT 1651	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 10/25/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/511,426	Applicant(s) HOSHINO ET AL.	
	Examiner Irene Marx	Art Unit 1651	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 August 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-6,8,9,14,16,17,19 and 20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7,10-13,15,18,21 and 22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

The application should be reviewed for errors.

To facilitate processing of papers at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, it is recommended that the Application Serial Number be inserted on every page of claims and/or of amendments filed.

Applicant's election of Group II, claims 7-13 in the reply filed on 8/20/07 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Upon careful review of the claims it is noted that the elected process of making a carboxylic acid encompasses claims 7, 10-13, 15, 18, and 21-22, but does not encompass claims 8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 19-20 which belong properly in group II, since they are directed to a process of making an aldehyde dehydrogenase, and not to a process of making a carboxylic acid. Thus, group II comprises claims 5-6, 8-9, 14, 16-17 and 19-20.

Claims 7, 10-13, 15, 18, 21 and 22 are being considered on the merits. Claims 1-6, 8-9, 14, 16-17 and 19-20 are withdrawn from consideration as directed to a non-elected invention.

The confusion is regretted.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 7, 10-13, 15, 18, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 7 is vague, indefinite and confusing in the use of parenthesis, since it is unclear whether the parenthetical material is or is not intended to be part of the claim.

Claims 7 and 13 are confusing in lacking antecedent basis for "the aldehyde" at line 2 or 3, respectively.

Claim 13 is incomplete as depending on a non-elected claim.

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Claims 11 and 12 do not find clear antecedent basis in claim 7 for the products produced. Is dependency on claim 10 intended?

Claims 11 and 18 are confusing in that the antecedent basis for "respectively" is unclear regarding pH and temperature.

Claims 7, 10-13, 15, 18, 21 and 22 are incomplete in the absence of a recovery step for the product produced.

While there is no specific rule or statutory requirement which specifically addresses the need for a recovery step in a process of preparing a composition, it is clear from the record and would be expected from conventional preparation processes that the product must be isolated or recovered. Thus, the claims fail to particularly point out and distinctly claim the "complete" process since the recovery step is missing from the claims. The metes and bounds of the claimed process are therefore not clearly established or delineated.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 7, 10-13, 15, 18, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asakura *et al.*.

The claims are directed to a process of using purified aldehyde dehydrogenase or a cell-free extract of *Gluconobacter* to produce a carboxylic acid and/or its lactone from an aldehyde, in particular strain *Gluconobacter oxidans* DSM 4025.

Asakura *et al.* disclose the production of carboxylic acid from an aldehyde using a purified aldehyde dehydrogenase or a cell-free extract from strain *Gluconobacter oxidans* DSM 4025, using the same conditions as claimed. See, e.g., col. 6, lines 14-20.

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The reference differs from the claimed invention in that the specific production of vitamin C is not disclosed. However, one of ordinary skill in the art would reasonably have expected at the time the claimed invention was made that the required biotransformation to occur using the cell extract from this strain, since it has been shown to be capable of the required production of carboxylic acids from aldehydes, and the required reaction is inherent in the identical strain.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to modify the process of Asakura *et al.* by using a cell-free extract of *Gluconobacter oxidans* DSM 4025 to produce vitamin C by adjusting process conditions, if necessary, for the expected benefit of optimizing the production of this useful vitamin.

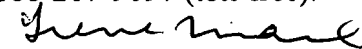
Thus, the claimed invention as a whole was clearly *prima facie* obvious, especially in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

No claim is allowed.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Irene Marx whose telephone number is (571) 272-0919. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30-3:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Wityshyn can be reached on 571-272-0926. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Irene Marx
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1651